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WORKERS WORLD

Workers and opressed peoples of the world unite!

Nov. 12, 2009 Vol. 51, No. 45 50¢

Detroit group calls protest after

FBI agents gun down Muslim leader

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire
Detroit

More than 1,000 people attended funeral services for Imam Luqman Ameen Abdullah on Oct. 31 at the Muslim Center on Detroit's West Side. The African-American Muslim leader had been gunned down by FBI agents three days earlier.

Speakers at the services stressed that Imam Abdullah was known throughout the city and country as a peaceful man who worked tirelessly to help the poor people in the community surrounding the Masjid Al-Haqq mosque, where he had presided for decades. Questions were raised about the account of the events given by the FBI, the U.S. Attorney's office and the corporate media.

According to information that surfaced just days after his assassination, the imam was shot 18 times by FBI agents at a warehouse in Dearborn, located right outside the city of Detroit. The warehouse had been set up by the FBI in an attempt to frame the mosque members for involvement in "stolen goods." The purported "stolen goods" were also supplied by the FBI.

Imam Dawud Walid, executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) in Michigan, told the "Fighting for Justice" radio program, which aired on the Detroit affiliate of Air America on Nov. 1, that "Imam Luqman was shot 18 times before he was handcuffed and placed on a stretcher. In a meeting between the FBI, representatives of the U.S. Attorney's office and area leaders of the Muslim community on Friday, they informed us that Imam Abdullah never fired on the

Continued on page 6

HEALTH CARE STRUGGLE

Sit-ins for single payer 2

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FORD WORKERS VOTE NO

'Enough is enough' 4

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A civil rights investigation in the case of

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WHEN DO WE NEED IT?

NOW!

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We demand that the Justice Department conduct a civil rights investigation into the 28-year conspiracy—organized through police, prosecutorial, and judicial criminal misconduct—to railroad Mumia, an innocent man, to death. As U.S. Attorney General, Eric Holder has the duty to monitor and remedy racist and corrupt practices in law enforcement and to safeguard our civil rights. He can challenge the Philly DA's outrageous pursuit of Mumia's execution and Gov. Ed Rendell's promise to sign the death warrant. A civil rights investigation could lead to Mumia's release!

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For information and transportation: NYC: **212-330-8029;** Philadelphia: **215-476-8812;** Washington, DC: **301-762-9162; www.freemumia.com**

■ Sign the petition **www.iacenter.org/mumiapetition/**

■ Download the petition at **troopsoutnow.org/mumiapetition.pdf.** Sign and mail by Nov. 6

Resistance builds to huge cuts in education

Students, teachers block traffic in San Diego to protest state budget cuts. 7

WW PHOTO: BOB MCCUBBIN

HONDURAS ACCORD Zelaya says 'Be vigilant' 9 **PENTAGON BUDGET** Growth of a bloodsucker 8

Sit-ins call for Medicare for all

By Betsey Piette

WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

Baltimore sit-in for single-payer health care.

As a plethora of "health care reform" bills circulate through the halls of Congress, a new movement is emerging on the streets—taking the fight for health care reform directly to the doors of the health insurance industry giants who, for all too long, have put their profits before people's care.

Using tactics reminiscent of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, Mobilization for Health Care for All has launched a "Patients Not Profits" campaign of sit-ins at insurance company offices across the U.S. to demand "Medicare for all."

Launched at the end of September, when 16 activists were arrested for occupying the lobby of Aetna Inc. in New York to demand that the company approve immediate care for people with critical conditions, this movement has spread through coast-to-coast actions.

On Oct. 15, sit-ins took place at offices of major insurers in nine cities. Since Oct. 28 direct actions against the health insurance industry and in favor of a single-payer health care system have been held in many others, including Augusta, Ga.; Columbus, Ohio; Sunrise, Fla.; Newark, N.J.; Seattle; Virginia Beach, Va.; and Warwick, R.I. More are planned through Nov. 4. To date, more than 200 people have risked arrest and the numbers are growing.

On Oct. 29 dozens marched outside the CareFirst office in Baltimore wearing bright yellow T-shirts with the slogan "People Not Profits," while a smaller group went inside and got arrested. One arrestee was 81-year-old Charles Loubert, who was denied health care several years ago by his insurer. Dr. Margaret Flowers also took an arrest at the CareFirst office, despite the risk of a 6-month jail sentence for violating her probation from a previous arrest.

On Oct. 30 in Louisville, Ky., seven activists occupied the offices and lobby of the Humana Corporation for over 24 hours. They vowed to stay until Humana met their demands.

Outside the Blue Cross Blue Shield building in Philadelphia the same day, nearly 80 protesters picketed and chanted, "Let the corporate giants fall! Medicare for all!" in a spirited demonstration that drew in a number of passersby. Many were young adults from the population sector least likely to have employer-paid insurance. Members of the Student Healthcare Action Network were among 13 people arrested for blocking the building entrance.

Protesters have charged the health insurance industry with crimes including murder, breach of contract, theft and waste of U.S. health care dollars, and subverting democracy by spending huge amounts of health premium money on lobbying and contributing to politicians.

With all the congressional debate over a public option, these sit-ins are driving home the point that the real public option must be Medicare for all—a single-payer plan that cuts out the profits of the insurance company intermediaries.

Under the current system, at least 30 cents out of every dollar spent on health care goes to insurance company profits and administrative waste. According to health industry research firm McKinsey & Co., almost two-thirds of insurance company overhead goes to underwriting, sales and marketing—business costs that would not exist in a single-payer system.

While far more is spent on health care in the U.S. than in any other industrialized country, an estimated 50 million people are not insured and 45,000 die every year for lack of care. While providing everyone health care insurance, the single-payer plan would cut costs by using only one not-for-profit administrator.

The profits of the top 10 health insurance companies went up 428 percent from 2000 to 2007. CEOs of large health insurance companies typically make $7 million to $12 million a year or more in salaries. Aetna's CEO, Ron Williams, made $24 million last year.

Mobilization for Health Care for All's Web site notes, "The insurance companies are spending millions to confuse and scare the public to keep us from ending their grip on our health and our money. With tea-bagger town hall protestors and the right-wing noise machine on their side, they're winning. We can't let that happen. It's time to take the fight to the real villain in the health care debate."

These protests are also motivated by frustration over the slow progress and limited content of the bills in Congress that more and more appear to benefit the health insurance industry while still denying care to the millions in need.

'Public option' a raw deal

None of the bills currently under discussion offers a single-payer option, which was shut out of the debate early on. The single-payer option H.R. 676 bill introduced by Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.) remains tied up in committee.

The public option proposals are not single-payer plans but government-sponsored "alternatives" to private insurance. Some could actually end up being more expensive to individuals than current insurance plans.

A scaled-back government plan in the House bill might actually favor private insurers. This plan, which would not be fully phased in until 2019, would cover about 6 million people, or 2 percent of a total of the 282

Continued on page 3

This week ...

WORKERS WORLD WW

★ In the U.S.

FBI agents gun down Muslim leader 1
Sit-ins call for Medicare for all 2
Meetings hear Marxist analysis of capitalism 3
Ford workers: No right to strike? No way! 4
Large union-community protests target bankers 4
On the picket line 4
Why youth should attend WWP conference 5
Cleveland FIST protests FBI 5
Students protest anti-Muslim hate speech 6
Universities march against huge budget cuts 7
Students, teachers block traffic over cuts 7
Activists slam billionaire mayor 7
The Pentagon budget: largest ever and growing 8

★ Around the world

President Zelaya urges Hondurans to be vigilant 9
Solidarity team reports on struggle in Honduras 9
U.S. war crimes in Pakistan, Afghanistan 11
Cuba wins again at U.N. 11

★ Editorials

Revoluton–then and now 10

★ Noticias En Español

Líder musulmán asesinado 12

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Meetings hear Marxist analysis of 'Low-Wage Capitalism'

By Dee Knight
New York

Fred Goldstein, author of "Low-Wage Capitalism," was the featured speaker at two recent New York events: a Brecht Forum meeting and a conference of the Union of Radical Political Economists (URPE) in Brooklyn. He was also interviewed on radio station WBAI-FM in New York and KFAI-FM in Minneapolis. These activities were part of the launching of the new book, a process that began formally in September.

Another radio interview is slated for Nov. 16 on WHCR-FM in New York with Nellie Bailey, chair of the Harlem Tenants Council. And on Nov. 22 Goldstein will be hosted at the Hue-Man Bookstore and Cafe in Harlem.

Goldstein's talk at the radical Brecht Forum in Greenwich Village coincided with an official announcement that the U.S. economy had finally registered some growth in the third quarter of 2009, after two years of decline. Goldstein seized the moment to point out that official unemployment figures also grew in the same period, and are poised to top 10 percent. The so-called "jobless recovery," he observed, is a recent phenomenon, reflecting the growing crisis of capitalism overproduction brought on by the overall rise in the productivity of labor.

Goldstein highlighted two key causes of the decline of workers' wages in the imperialist countries over the past three decades.

The first was the collapse of the Soviet Union and the concomitant opening of China and India to external capitalist penetration, resulting in a doubling to three billion of the number of workers available for exploitation by imperialism.

The second was the scientific and technological revolution—computers, the Internet, supertankers, satellites and software—which have made it possible for large corporations to create global webs of production, which he characterized as "global chains of superexploitation." He illustrated this by describing how a Dell computer is made in a web of factories around the globe, each with a cluster of suppliers that are forced to compete with each other. These combined factors have allowed the large corporations to push wages down drastically—and they are not yet satisfied.

In his comments on the prospects for a fightback, Goldstein noted that two unions whose traditions are still rooted in the struggles of the 1930s have set examples for the future: the United Electrical Workers and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union on the West Coast. It is no accident, he observed, that these two unions have defied traditional "business unionism" methods.

UE Local 1110 carried out the seizure and occupation of Republic Doors and Windows in Chicago last fall, while the ILWU staged a one-day shutdown of West Coast ports on May Day, 2008, to protest the war in Iraq. It is notable that in the plant occupation at Republic Doors and Windows, immigrant and women workers took the lead. And in the port shutdown, a large percentage of the workers were African-American. These developments reflect a significant change in the makeup of the working class.

Goldstein also highlighted the importance of labor-community alliances, not only to confront the bosses and the government but also to loosen the grip of union officials who are caught in the old patterns of "labor peace" and class collaboration.

Both of Goldstein's presentations were captured digitally by People's Video Network and will be available soon both at www.workers.org and on YouTube. The same is true for the radio interviews.

Other aspects of the ongoing launch of "Low-Wage Capitalism" include its presentation at a forum of progressive intellectuals in Europe by Workers World managing editor John Catalinotto and anticipated reviews in a number of progressive publications. Goldstein's plans include visits to conferences and bookstores across the country during the coming year. □

Sit-ins call for Medicare for all

Continued from page 2

million people in the U.S. under age 65.

Some plans offer new "marketplaces" for consumers to compare rates and benefits, but there are no guarantees that any of these rates would be affordable for low-income workers. While the health care bills would extend coverage to uninsured people by providing government help with premiums to people under a certain income, most would have to wait until 2013 for this coverage. Even then, many would have to pay a significant share of their own health care costs.

Proposals to tax individuals who fail to purchase insurance could also negatively impact low-wage workers and small employers. Workers could make too much to qualify for government assistance in purchasing insurance, while not earning enough to pay expensive premiums. These workers could end up being penalized by higher taxes yet still be uninsured.

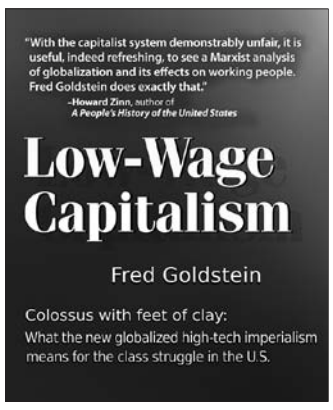
The groups hardest hit by nearly all the plans are the working poor—those who make more than the poverty level but not enough to afford private health insurance premiums. Many are in service industry jobs or are employed by small companies that can't afford to offer insurance. Among this group, many are women, including a significant number of Latina workers.

None of the legislation being proposed would cover undocumented workers, even though these workers often pay Social Security and Medicare taxes but can't receive the benefits.

While all the plans seem to propose restrictions on gender-based insurance rates and on the insurance industries' past practices of refusing care based on pre-existing conditions, none places any cap on how high insurance premiums could go in the future. □

WORLD VIEW FORUM

Special offer for Workers World's 50th anniversary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Colossus with feet of clay:
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What the new globalized high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S.

Fred Goldstein's timely new book describes the drastic effect of new technology on the working class and global capitalism's restructuring in the post-Soviet era. It uses Karl Marx's law of wages and other findings to show that these developments drive down wages and are creating the material basis for future social upheaval and the end of working-class compromise and retreat in the struggle against capital.
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This classic work by Sam Marcy, Workers World Party's founder, has been reissued for WW's 50th anniversary. As wages and employment fall, this book rings as true today as when it was published two decades ago. Marcy explained how the high-tech revolution destroyed high-paying jobs while it changed the social composition of the working class, bringing more of the oppressed into workplaces, raising the potential for more solidarity and struggle.

Fred Goldstein's new introduction explains the roots of today's economic crisis, with its disastrous unemployment, which has heightened the need for a working-class resurgence. "High Tech, Low Pay" is a must-read for working people—employed and unemployed, organized and unorganized—and activists nationwide.
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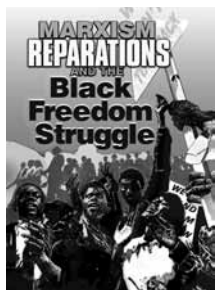

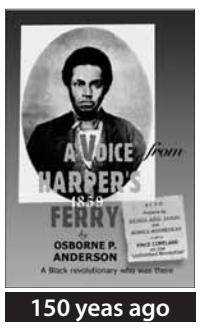

150 yeas ago

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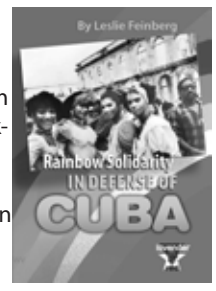

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Workers tell Ford Motor:

No right to strike? No way!

By Martha Grevatt

Nov. 2—Losing a job is a scary thing for any worker to contemplate. It's certainly scary for any worker lucky enough to still have a job with union wages and benefits. The fear of job loss has for several years led members of the once-mighty United Auto Workers to accept drastic concessions they normally wouldn't consider.

Nevertheless, UAW Ford workers have overwhelmingly voted down the latest package of contract modifications, sending a powerful message to their bosses. "We've taken enough," Dan Coll told the Detroit Free Press. "Enough's enough."

Coll, a member of UAW Local 600 at Ford's Dearborn, Mich., truck assembly plant reminded the Free Press reporter that he and 41,000 other Ford workers had just approved major givebacks in March. These included suspending cost-of-living-allowance (COLA) increases and scheduled bonuses, weakening job and income security provisions, sacrificing an annual paid holiday, and break-time reductions that add up to 40 hours more free labor for the bosses each year.

Why, just seven months later, did Ford think it could ask the UAW leadership to convince the rank and file to give up more? Ford wanted the additional concessions that the bosses at General Motors and Chrysler, with the help of the U.S. Treasury, squeezed out of their hourly employees by threatening to liquidate operations altogether. The reorganized GM and Chrysler corporations will be able to freeze the wages of future workers at $14 an hour and impose a no-strike rule on all workers until 2015, even though the current contract expires in 2011.

That's what Ford bosses wanted and what they said they needed to be "competitive." UAW International President Ron Gettelfinger campaigned for a "yes" vote on the contract changes—which included a more limited no-strike rule and a bonus of $1,000 not offered at GM or Chrysler—with the argument that "we're talking about 7,000 jobs that have either been created and/or protected by this agreement."

"Members at Ford retain the right to strike on every issue—and I say every issue—except improvements in wages and benefits," Gettelfinger told Frank Beckmann of WJR-AM. "If Ford was to propose a cut, we would maintain the right to strike. That would never even go to arbitration. This has become a flash-point issue, but this agreement is not about that." (MLive.com, Oct. 27)

Ford hourly workers, who so far are voting down the concessions two-to-one, know better. The promise of job security—or more accurately the threat of job loss—has been used to pass concessions for decades, especially in the 2007 contract and again last March. Yet where are the jobs? At one time Local 600, which led the fight to unionize Ford in the 1930s, had 100,000 members at the sprawling Rouge complex. Now the total number of UAW hourly workers at Ford is 41,000 and falling.

Ford workers want no part of even a limited restriction on the right to strike. Wouldn't they want to reserve the right to strike to restore COLA, for example, so their pay could start to catch up with inflation? Workers know that without the right to strike they have no leverage—they're at the mercy of the companies.

That's why a number of anti-concession leaflets—some from rank-and-file activists and some from local leaders—made the rounds on the shop floors. When UAW Vice President Bob King tried to sell the concessions at the Dearborn Truck plant, he was drowned out by workers chanting "No, no, no!" Only a small number of locals voted in favor of the modifications.

A healthy rivalry developed after 92 percent of the workers at the Kansas City assembly plant voted no. Dearborn Truck workers boasted of a 92.6 percent rejection rate, only to be outdone by a 93 percent no vote in Sandusky, Ohio.

While some locals are still voting as of this writing, Gettelfinger has acknowledged that the concessions will not pass. There are no plans for a revote or for further negotiations before 2011. Seen from a purely electoral point of view, this is a tremendous victory, and not only for the Ford workers. Some GM and Chrysler workers, whose plants are closing even after they agreed to such outrageous givebacks, are cheering the Ford vote.

All UAW members must categorically reject the idea that concessions—especially those that compromise the right to strike—are necessary to "protect and/or create" a specified number of jobs. The right to strike and the right to a job go hand in hand. In fact, both are recognized under U.S. and international law as a result of fierce class battles that took place in the 1930s.

Only the worst misleaders of the working class would suggest giving up one right—the right to strike—in exchange for a dubious promise to save a few thousand jobs. These jobs already belong to the workers as a property right!

Martha Grevatt has worked for 22 years at the Twinsburg, Ohio, Chrysler plant, which is scheduled to be closed next year. E-mail mgrevatt@workers.org.

Large union-community protests target bankers

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Chicago

For three days, from Oct. 25 to 27, thousands of poor and working people from across the U.S. came here to directly challenge the criminal bankers and bosses at an American Bankers Association conference.

Those protesting are fed up with taxpayer-funded trillion-dollar bailouts to the bankers, the foreclosure epidemic, the refusal of the government to implement a federally funded jobs program, the billions spent on U.S. wars instead of for people's needs and much more.

"We are here to demand that the banks and the government bail out the workers. Everyone has to stand up for dignity, for respect, for our families, for the working class," said Armando Robles, president of United Electrical Workers Local 1110. This UE local led the successful six-day sit-in at Republic Windows and Doors in December 2008.

Robles and his UE brother Keith Scribner, president of Local 174 at Quad City Die Casting in Moline, Ill., spoke before a sea of 5,000 poor and working people at a massive rally Oct. 27 directly in front of the Sheraton Hotel where the bankers' conference was being held. The crowd hoisted banners and signs in various languages declaring "Stop foreclosures: State of Emergency NOW" and "We need jobs." They chanted at the bankers, bosses and government officials, both Democrats and Republicans, who were hiding in the hotel: "We want our money back!"

Other speakers at the rally included Richard Trumka, newly elected president of the AFL-CIO; Anna Burger of the Change to Win Federation; the Rev. Jesse Jackson; and representatives of labor, community and student organizations throughout the Chicago region and beyond.

The rally was sponsored by the AFL-CIO and endorsed by numerous organizations throughout the U.S., including the Chicago-based community organization Action NOW, which says there have been 44,000 foreclosures in the Metro Chicago area since 2007 and more than 5 million foreclosures in the U.S. since 2007.

The main AFL-CIO demands were to stop foreclosures, stop bailout-funded bonuses, invest in jobs and small businesses, and invest in public services.

"We're sending a message. Business is over. We're shutting it down. We are not going to let bankers rule our country or our lives anymore. This is a new day," said Trumka.

Labor-community-student delegations marched to the Oct. 27 rally and drove in. Significant delegations came from youth-student organizations, African-American organizations and immigrant workers, including Asian and Latina women.

A van sponsored by Southeastern Michigan Jobs With Justice carried members of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs from Detroit. Workers from the Service Employees International Union, the Carpenters union, the International Association of Machinists, the Sheet Metal Workers International Association, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the American Federation of Teachers, UE and others participated.

On Oct. 25 protesters had crashed a large dinner meeting at the beginning of the bankers' conference, resulting in arrests. Other protest actions, such as demonstrations at the hotel, took place on Oct. 26. (www.showdowninchicago.org)

Those protesting in Chicago were clear that the Oct. 25-27 actions were just one part of building massive, organized resistance against the bankers and bosses. □

Hotel workers in San Francisco. WW PHOTO: JOAN MARQUARDT

On the Picket Line

NYC transit workers on the move

Chanting "No contract? No peace!" thousands of Transport Workers Local 100 members and supporters marched defiantly across the Brooklyn Bridge to New York's City Hall on Oct. 28. With spirits high during a second Day of Outrage, members wearing red Local 100 bandanas and carrying green glow sticks spanned the bridge from one end to the other. The workers were protesting the refusal of the Metropolitan Transit Authority and billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg to comply with the results of binding arbitration, which mandated that the workers receive an 11-percent wage hike over the new three-year contract.

The MTA has appealed the ruling, claiming that even this modest wage hike will jeopardize its coffers, enriched by a fare hike earlier this year. But the workers have paid enough for their valiant two-day strike in 2006. A report on www.twalocal100.org points out that if other government employers also "thumb their noses at arbitration," that leaves "public-sector unions with no legal options," given the Taylor Law's ban on strikes by city and state government workers. Acting Local 100 president, Curtis Tate, pointed out at the rally that there shouldn't be one set of rules for the government and one for the workers who keep the city running. Stay tuned.

—Sue Davis

Hotel workers prepared to strike

Hundreds of hotel workers, their families, friends and supporters picketed in front of the Intercontinental Hotel in San Francisco on Oct. 27 demanding a "Contract now!"

Visible at the busy intersection of 5th and Mission streets, the members of UNITE HERE Local 2 marched from early morning through the evening rush hour. African-American, Asian, Latino/a and white workers carried union signs in Chinese, Spanish and English. Their chants included "Who's in the fight? Local 2. Who's in the street? Local 2. Who's going to win? Local 2!" "Talking union is a right. We are here and ready to fight!" and "Who's got the power? We've got the power! What kind of power? Union kind of power!"

If this show of union strength and serious intent does not convince the owners of the hotels to propose a contract that the workers can agree to, Local 2 is prepared to call a strike against one or more of the 31 organized hotels at any time.

— Joan Marquardt

FIST appeal

Why youth should attend WWP conference

By Larry Hales

On Saturday, Nov. 14 and Sunday, Nov. 15, Workers World Party will hold its annual party conference in the public school at 127 E. 22nd St. in New York City. The theme of this year's conference will be "Preparing and Organizing for the Future."

As part of the conference, the youth group Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) will host a workshop on Saturday in the school cafeteria. The workshop will focus on the importance of young people fighting for a better world and the obstacles they face.

Also, as part of the workshop, FIST will highlight much of the work it has accomplished in the last six months, including the first edition of the organization's new quarterly newsletter, a blog radio show and a new edition of a WWP pamphlet originally published in 1971, "What Is Marxism All About: a street guide for young revolutionaries," which has been updated by FIST members.

When a crisis such as the one that exists today comes along, people, both young and old, begin to question the viability of the capitalist system. Though economists are claiming the worst to be over, jobs continue to be bled at an alarming rate to the tune of at least 200,000 a month. Obviously this so-called recovery is no recovery for the masses, who continue to suffer.

And, even for the bosses, the hits keep on coming, as the CIT Group recently declared bankruptcy, becoming the fifth-largest U.S. bank in history to collapse.

Certainly working and oppressed people should not deign to shed tears for the collapse of a financial institution, but what this latest failure illustrates is the shaky ground that capitalism finds itself standing on.

The economic tremors continue. Capitalism is nothing but a world of tremors punctuated by massive calamities, and only more of the same can be expected.

A very basic definition of capital, according to dictionary.com, is, "any form of wealth employed or capable of being employed in the production of more wealth." Capitalism is a system that is perpetuated through exploitation and oppression, they should add.

The wealth of the U.S., of the earliest rich and super-rich ruling elites, was won through the most naked exploitation—slavery, genocide and theft of land.

The Mellons, Carnegies, Rockefellers and DuPonts of yesterday, who used armed gangs such as the Pinkertons and other outfits to put down striking and enraged workers trying to survive and win their dignity through better working conditions and higher pay, may have been replaced by the Waltons, Buffets and Gateses, but it is the same old capitalism.

It will continue to be the same old capitalism until it is overthrown for something more humane—that is socialism, a world of working people in solidarity with one another instead of in competition with one another.

Join FIST, as we take part in this important conference, which will also celebrate the 50th anniversary of Workers World Party. Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!

Hales is a national organizer of FIST. Go to www.workersworld.net to preregister and find more information on the WWP conference.

Cleveland FIST protests FBI

By Caleb T. Maupin
Cleveland

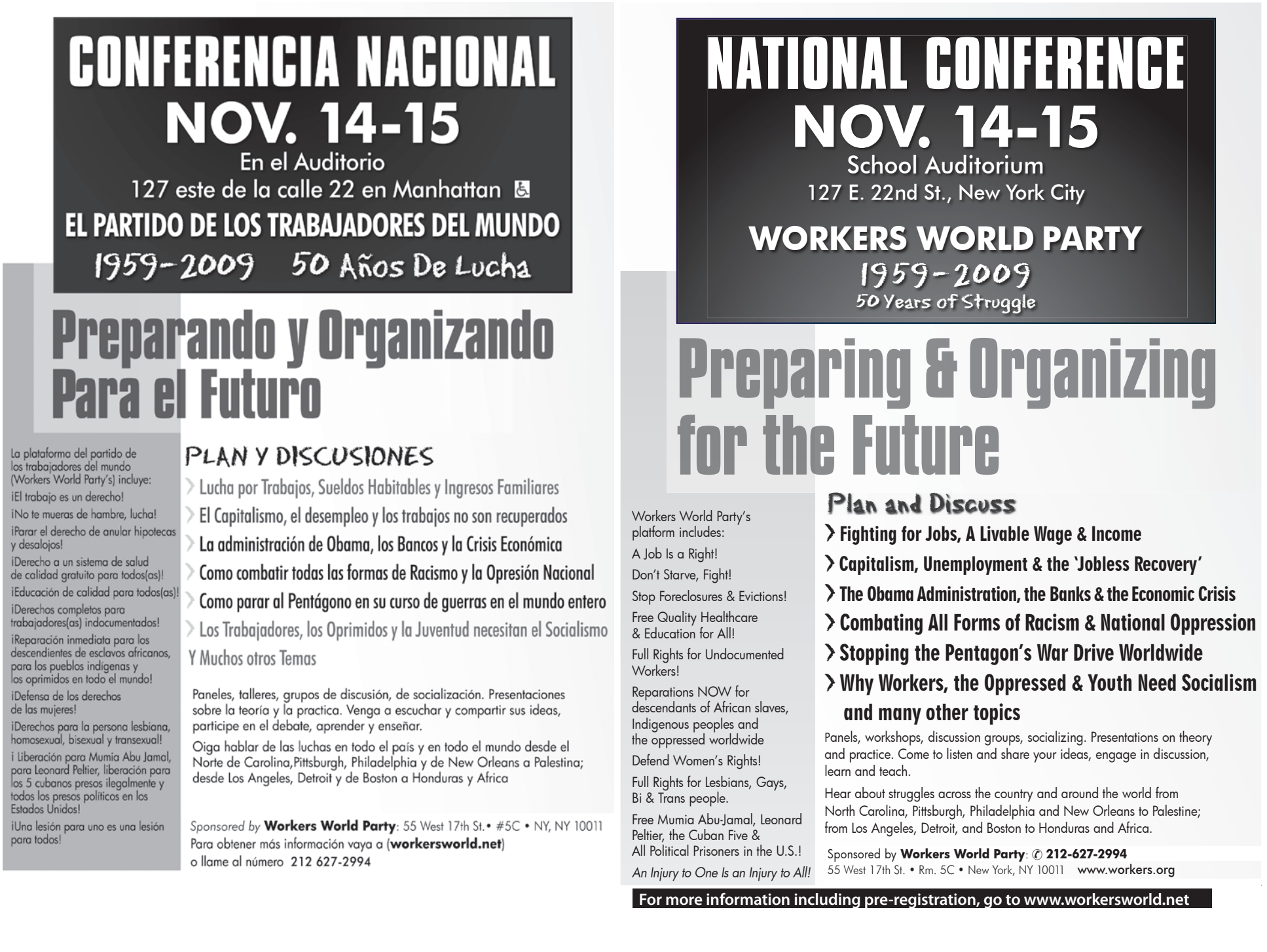
At Baldwin-Wallace College here, the FBI announced it was planning to hold a recruitment workshop. It advertised with the slogan, "The FBI—more than a job!" The literature used to advertise the workshop made it sound as if the FBI was a group of 007 action heroes who "prevent terrorist attacks" and "save hundreds of lives."

Organizers with the Cleveland chapter of Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) had other thoughts. It had recently been revealed that neo-Nazi Hal Turner received multiple payments from the FBI to fund his fascist radio program. Turner was being paid by the FBI when he called on the air for the assassination of African-American congressperson Cynthia McKinney. Turner was receiving FBI funds while he sold miniature nooses on his Web site during the outrage around the arrest of the Jena Six.

FIST organizers were also aware of the crimes of the FBI with regard to the Black Panther Party and the targeted assassination of its leaders, as well as the FBI's role in suppressing countless liberation struggles and progressive movements of the people against the wealthy Wall Street class that dominates the world.

So, on the sunny afternoon of Oct. 27, members of Cleveland FIST, Workers World Party and the Middle East Peace Forum set up a picket line outside Malicky Center where the FBI workshop was held. Handbills were given to people entering the FBI workshop explaining what the terrorist group attempting to recruit them was really all about.

The New Sun, a local newspaper in Berea, Ohio, interviewed the FIST members and their supporters. Several professors at the college shook hands with and congratulated the FIST members for organizing the protest. The FIST organizers received several e-mails in the hour following the protest from students who wanted to know more about the history of the FBI and its brutality against progressive movements. □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La administración de Obama, los Bancos y la Crisis Económica
Como combatir todas las formas de Racismo y la Opresión Nacional
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¡Educación de calidad para todos(as)!
¡Derechos completos para trabajadores(as) indocumentados!
¡Reparación inmediata para los descendientes de esclavos africanos, para los pueblos indígenas y los oprimidos en todo el mundo!
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Defend Women's Rights!
Full Rights for Lesbians, Gays, Bi & Trans people.
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Students protest anti-Muslim hate speech

By Audrey Hoak
Philadelphia

Trying to hide behind the transparent ruse of "free speech," anti-Islamic Dutch lawmaker Geert Wilders attempted to bring his hate-speech tour to Temple University here on Oct. 21. He was met with student resistance.

With very little notice of Wilders' engagement, students quickly filled Anderson Hall and heckled him off stage long before the question and answer part of his presentation began. Temple student Josh Rosenthal said, "I think it's completely wrong that someone who promotes racism and intolerance should be given a platform at this university. It's hate speech disguised as free speech."

Outside, a group of protesters held signs saying "Free Palestine" and "Prosecution for Israel's war crimes." They spoke to the media and engaged in conversations with passersby.

Initially the tour was rejected by the university because no student organization had sponsored Wilders. Then a fledgling group called "Purpose" made the invitation.

The Muslim Student Association immediately issued a statement saying, "The decision to allow Mr. Wilders to share his viewpoints is a danger not only for public safety of Muslims and the honor of the core principles of Islam, but also for academic integrity and objectivity on campus. We strongly urge that his invitation be rescinded immediately in order to foster appreciation of free speech that is not based on hatred and discrimination."

Geert Wilders is a small person with a colossal hatred. His résumé is ugly. Last year he released online an outrageous 15-minute video claiming, "Islam justifies violence and terrorism." He compared the Koran to Adolph Hitler's "Mein Kampf" and encourages a ban on Muslim immigration and the Koran itself.

Wilders, a member of the Dutch Parliament and chair of the "Party for Freedom"—possibly the only member—claims to be fed up with the worshipping of Allah in the Netherlands and wants to put a stop to the building of mosques. Wilders was banned at one time from Britain due to the threat he posed to community harmony.

Wilders' hate-speech tour was supported by racist, neoconservative David Horowitz, whose organization, Freedom Center, bankrolled Wilders' engagements at Temple University, Columbia University and at Philadelphia's Union League on Oct. 22, where the ticket prices ranged from $100 to $2,500.

Broader anti-Muslim campaign

This anti-Muslim witch hunt has spread to the halls of the U.S. Congress, where on Oct. 15 bigoted, fear-mongering Republican Reps. Paul Broun, Sue Myrick, John Shadegg and Trent Franks held a press conference requesting an investigation into whether Muslim interns in Congress are spies. The four accused the Council on American-Islamic Relations of trying to "infiltrate the offices of members of Congress."

The Department of Homeland Security and the FBI are also engaged in a systematic campaign against Muslim communities. Since 2001, hundreds of Muslims have been unjustly incarcerated by means of prosecutorial misconduct, entrapment and slander of Islam.

Add to that "enhanced sentencing" and "preemptive prosecution" and you've got sentences of life plus 30 years for crimes never committed, as in the case of the Fort Dix Five. As a reward for the soiled conviction in this case, agents provocateurs were paid $400,000 over a year and a half, had their criminal records expunged, and gained U.S. citizenship for themselves and their families.

There are many other such cases. The number can only be expected to grow with the recent loosening of FBI rules that will allow agents to go into mosques, not where they have reason to believe there is criminal activity, but as agents provocateurs trying to incite individuals to join a purported terror plot.

A disproportionate number of Muslims are held in Communication Management Units. These are an unprecedented creation of the Bureau of Prisons designed to evade public scrutiny. They house prisoners in stark isolation from the outside world and allow them no recourse to challenge their placement there. □

Detroit group calls protest after FBI guns down Mu

Continued from page 1

federal agents. They said that the imam shot at an FBI dog and then he was shot by the agents. The dog was medevaced to a veterinary hospital while the Imam received no medical attention," Imam Walid said.

Also speaking on the program was Imam Abdullah Bey El-Amin of the Muslim Center, where the funeral had just been held for the assassinated leader. Imam El-Amin corroborated that "Imam Abdullah had multiple, multiple, multiple gunshot wounds to his body." El-Amin, a funeral director by profession, prepared the slain leader's body for burial.

Imams Walid and El-Amin, plus other prominent Islamic leaders in the Detroit area, have called for an independent investigation into the circumstances surrounding Imam Abdullah's death. Callers to the radio program interpreted the shooting and the arrests of 11 other Masjid Al-Haqq members as a continuation of the federal government's counterintelligence program (Cointelpro), which was implemented against so-called dissidents between the 1950s and the 1970s.

The African-American community suffered the most damage from the Cointelpro terror operations, which resulted in the deaths of numerous leaders and the framing of others by the federal government and local police agencies across the country.

Groups to demonstrate at Federal Building

In response to the assassination of Imam Abdullah, the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice (MECAWI) has called for a mass demonstration outside the federal building in downtown Detroit on Nov. 5, from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. The demonstration is designed both to condemn the assassination of the Islamic leader as well as demand an independent investigation into his death at the hands of the FBI.

Groups endorsing the demonstration include the Detroit Coalition Against Police Brutality, Latinos Unidos of Michigan, Students for Justice in Palestine, the Detroit Green Party and Workers World Party.

A statement issued by MECAWI on Nov. 2 said, "The FBI and the media headlines are trying to cover up this outrageous murder. But their story has changed every day as more and more facts have come to light. Even the government's own 'criminal complaint' makes it clear that there was no reason for this huge assault on the Muslim community."

PHOTO: MUSLIM ALLIANCE OF NORTH AMERICA
Imam Luqman Ameen Abdullah

Economic crisis in Detroit

Many people who knew Imam Abdullah and the members of Masjid Al-Haqq say that the group worked to rid the severely oppressed community around the mosque of the social ills resulting from years of exploitation and neglect.

Even the mosque itself fell victim to the economic crisis that is worsening in Detroit. On Jan. 20, Masjid Al-Haqq was evicted from the building where it had been housed for years as a result of tax foreclosure. The mosque relocated at a home on Clairmount Street, which was also raided on Oct. 28.

Dawud Walid of CAIR said of Imam Abdullah, "I know him as a respected imam in the Muslim community." He added, "We have no information about illegal activity going on at that mosque."

Walid said Imam Abdullah "would give the shirt off his back to people. The congregation he led was poor. He fed very hungry people in the neighborhood who were Christian. He helped and assisted a lot of troubled youth. People would come up to him who were hungry and he would let them sleep in the mosque. He would let them in from the elements." (Detroit News, Oct. 29)

The CAIR leader said, "They have no linkage to terrorism nationally or internationally. What in the world does Islam have to do with these charges? Why is religion being brought into play?"

Resurrecting Cointelpro

Not only are the FBI and the corporate media utilizing the false construct of "Islamic extremism," they are also attempting to draw a direct link between the revolutionary movements that emerged during the 1960s and the assault on the Masjid Al-Haqq members.

Because of a close relationship between Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin, formerly known as H. Rap Brown, and Imam Abdullah during previous years, the role of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Black Panther Party (BPP) has been evoked in news coverage of the FBI and police raids. Imam Al-Amin first served as a field organizer for SNCC and later national chair of the civil rights and Black Power group in 1967-68.

Al-Amin, who is currently serving a life sentence in Georgia after being convicted in the death of a deputy sheriff and the wounding of another in Atlanta in 2000, also briefly held the position of minister of justice in the BPP during 1968. He had served as SNCC chair during a period of extreme repression against the organization in 1967-68.

Al-Amin has always maintained his innocence in the deaths of the law-enforcement officers in Atlanta and for many years has sought to win an appeal of his case. Reports from the Georgia prison system where he is being held indicate that he has been harassed and placed in isolation on numerous occasions.

SNCC was partly blamed by the FBI and the corporate media during 1967-68 for the urban rebellions that erupted in more than 200 cities. The BPP was to suffer the brunt of the Cointelpro operations directed against the African-American community.

More than two dozen members of the BPP were killed between 1968 and 1971 after former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover labeled the organization as the most dangerous threat to the national security of the United States. Hundreds of Panthers and other revolutionaries of the time were arrested and railroaded through the courts. Many others were driven into exile abroad or forced underground inside the U.S.

According to the FBI complaint in the current case, which consists of 45 pages of highly spurious allegations, Abdullah "calls his followers to an offensive jihad" and says they should "have a weapon and should not be scared to use their weapon when needed."

Ron Scott, one of the founding members of the Detroit chapter of the BPP in 1968, spoke to the Pan-African News Wire about the death of Imam Abdullah and the arrests of the Masjid Al-Haqq members.

Scott, now spokesperson for the Detroit Coalition Against Police Brutality and a media host on the locally broadcast "For My People" television show, as well as the "Fighting for Justice" radio program aired every week, expressed disbelief at the allegations made against Abdullah and those arrested.

"This reflects a standard of repression that we have not seen in a long time," Scott told the Pan-African News Wire on Oct. 29. "There should be an independent investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death of Imam Abdullah."

The Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice (MECAWI) discussed the killing of Imam Abdullah at its weekly meeting on Oct. 28 in Detroit. The next day, in a telephone call to the offices of the Council of American-Islamic Relations, a MECAWI representative expressed the organization's condolences and solidarity with the Islamic community.

Repression grows against Muslims

Since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, repression against the Islamic, Middle Eastern and South Asian communities in the U.S. has escalated at an alarming rate. A number of people have been attacked and even killed in racist violence.

Many more people from these communities have been imprisoned unjustly and deported. A number of charitable organizations have been taken into court for allegedly funding "terrorist" groups and some have been forced to shut down by the

Universities march against huge budget cuts

By G. Dunkel
New York

Some 400 to 500 faculty, staff and students from the City University of New York and the State University of New York marched and rallied against midyear budget cuts on Oct. 27.

Like most public colleges and universities throughout the country, CUNY and SUNY are overflowing with students who want to increase their skills to improve their chances of getting a job.

CUNY now has 250,000 students, the most in decades, and its six community colleges, which are open to any students with a high-school diploma, have been forced to put thousands more on waiting lists. Two-thirds of CUNY students are people of color and more than 60 percent were born outside the United States. (CUNY Office of Institutional Research)

SUNY is less diverse but has 440,000 students spread across 64 campuses, according to a report on the New York State United Teachers Web site.

New York Gov. David Paterson's response to the state's booming enrollment in public higher education has been to cut the budgets of CUNY and SUNY—SUNY by $410 million over the past 18 months and a $68.3 million cut for CUNY last year and $44 million this year.

In the last two weeks of October Paterson cut $90 million out of the SUNY budget and proposed cutting $53 million from CUNY, along with taking $33 million from CUNY and SUNY community colleges.

Paterson also decreased the most common form of student aid by $120, starting next semester, and got CUNY and SUNY to raise tuition in their senior colleges by 15 percent.

Behind booming drums, the march left Hunter College on Manhattan's posh East Side and marched to a rally site on Fifth Avenue. The most popular chants were "The unions united will never be defeated!" and "Students, faculty, staff, unite! Same struggle, same fight!"

Students seemed to like "No tuition hikes! We will do what's right! We will fight, fight, fight!"

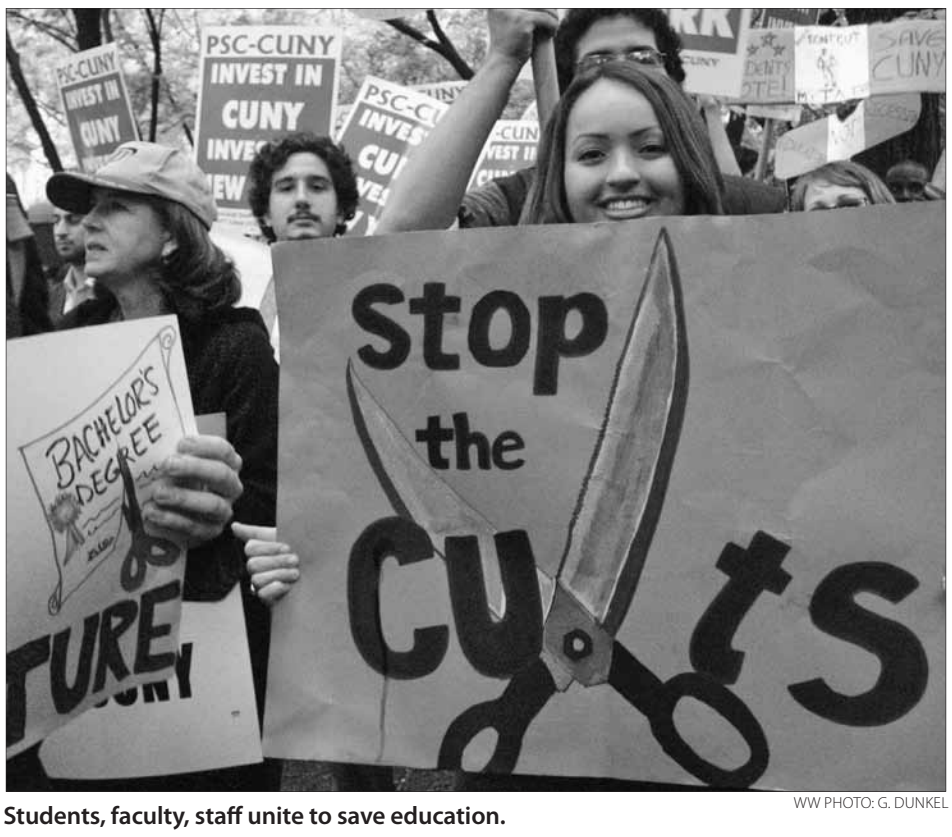
Phil Smith, president of United University Professionals, which represents the faculty and staff at SUNY, said the struggle had to continue and called for a demonstration Nov. 10 in Albany, when the state Legislature convenes in a special session to make budget cuts.

Barbara Bowen, president of the Professional Staff Congress, which represents the faculty and staff at CUNY, said, "There is tremendous power when we all come together with a single message: Hands off higher ed! I'm tired of the attack on us, because that's what it is—an attack on every family, every person who relies on public education, and an attack on every student who hears, 'Stay in school.'" A number of high school students expressed their trepidation about how cuts in higher education would affect them.

Bowen pointed out that the state government has a $1.5 billion "rainy day" reserve fund it could use. It could also step up efforts to collect taxes that are unpaid and stop contracting out work at a saving of $730 million over the next three years.

Bowen predicted that the struggle against budget cuts isn't over and that more and bigger demonstrations will take place.

The contract for the United Federation of Teachers, which represents 85,000 kindergarten through 12th grade instructors and staff in New York City schools, expired Oct. 31. It is clear that the city's Department of Education will demand significant concessions from the UFT. □



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Students, faculty, staff unite to save education.

uslim leader

U.S. government.

Even CAIR has been targeted by these government efforts. In Texas during 2007, members of an Islamic charity were put on trial for supposedly funding Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Conversion to the Islamic faith within the African-American community has been taking place at a phenomenal rate over the last few decades. The federal government has used both the scourge of anti-Islamic hysteria and racism to enhance the repressive apparatus in the U.S. This pattern of surveillance, harassment and entrapment is utilized in a desperate attempt by Homeland Security and the Pentagon to build support for the ongoing wars against Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

In addition to these Middle Eastern and Asian nations, the countries of Sudan and Somalia on the African continent, which are predominantly Muslim, have also been focal points for U.S. imperialist intervention over the last several years. Many of the developing nations that have been identified by the U.S. imperialists for destabilization and occupation have majority Muslim populations of people of color.

Consequently, anti-war, civil rights and human rights organizations should view the current wave of repression against the Islamic community as having both a domestic and a foreign policy objective. Demonizing the Islamic community, whether the Muslims are of African, Middle Eastern or Asian descent, provides a mechanism for the repressive apparatus of the state to justify the continuation and escalation of military involvement abroad.

At the same time, the increasing repression against the African-American, Islamic, Latino/a and other working-class communities inside the U.S. is designed to hamper the ability of people to organize against the growing economic crisis that is disproportionately affecting the oppressed peoples inside the domestic confines of the country.

Nonetheless, the fight against this wave of repression can potentially bring together workers and the oppressed from broad sections of the U.S. into an alliance with the developing countries that are increasingly threatened by U.S. imperialism. □

Students, teachers block traffic over cuts

By Bob McCubbin
San Diego

The school system in California was once considered a global model for what a public higher education system should look like. Now it is quickly being dismantled by a political system that values repression over education, prisons over schools. The statewide protests that started last spring, following the passage of severe cuts in the California state education budget, are continuing and growing.

The latest pro-education action in San Diego was called by local affiliates of the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association, the San Diego/Imperial County Labor Council, and local community and student groups. On Oct. 29 several hundred angry activists rallied in Balboa Park, marched downtown to the State Office Building and sat down in the street outside the building, blocking traffic. They demanded a hearing from a representative of the governor.

Students, faculty and support staff from most of the area's colleges and universities were in attendance for the rally, march and sit-in. High school students and community activists also participated.

A large contingent of faculty members from South County's Southwestern College came wearing bright yellow T-shirts emblazoned with the slogan, "Support students, get suspended?" Faculty union leader Phil Lopez explained to the crowd at the rally that he and three other faculty members who attended a recent student rally at the school, following the announcement of major cuts in spring 2010 courses, were put on academic leave for "unruly behaviors."

Three of the four, all active in the faculty union, have been barred from teaching their classes or even setting foot on campus. Police were sent to their homes to inform them of the actions against them. The school's president was "on vacation" and thus unavailable for clarification. □

Activists slam billionaire mayor

New York—"Bloomberg, you can't hide, you're on the bosses' side!" rang out on a crowded stretch of Broadway here Oct. 30. The Bail Out the People Movement called the protest to demand "Jobs yes! Racism no! Union busting's got to go!" Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the richest man in New York and the eighth-richest billionaire in the U.S., is running for re-election and had campaigned the week before with former Mayor Rudy Giuliani, a notorious racist. They held hands while spewing not very subtle racism-mongering speeches in the better-off neighborhoods of New York. The protest was held just feet away from Bloomberg's Manhattan campaign office.

Rob Robinson and Frank Morales of the organization Picture the Homeless slammed the mayor for the record number of homeless—39,000 people a night now sleep in shelters. Mike Filippou, a leader of the heroic Stella D'Oro workers, raised his fist against Bloomberg, condemning him for doing nothing to stop the closing of their plant while the company received tax abatements from the city. The BOPM called for uniting the hundreds of struggles taking place each week in New York into a more effective and militant front against the Wall Street forces attacking the working class and oppressed.

WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

BOPM organizers Larry Hales and Jennifer Waller–who co-chaired the rally–spoke on the crisis young people face in this city, from cuts in education to the increase in incarcerations.

—Gavrielle Gemma

The Pentagon budget: largest ever and growing

By Sara Flounders

On Oct. 28, President Barack Obama signed the 2010 Defense Authorization Act, the largest military budget in U.S. history.

It is not only the world's largest military budget but is larger than the military expenditures of the whole rest of the world combined. And it is growing nonstop. The 2010 military budget—which doesn't even cover many war-related expenditures—is listed as $680 billion. In 2009 it was $651 billion and in 2000 was $280 billion. It has more than doubled in 10 years.

What a contrast to the issue of health care.

The U.S. Congress has been debating a basic health care plan—which every other industrialized country in the world has in some form—for more than six months. There has been intense insurance company lobbying, right-wing threats, and dire warnings that a health care plan must not add one dime to the deficit.

Yet in the midst of this life-and-death debate on medical care for millions of working and poor people who have no health coverage, a gargantuan subsidy to the largest U.S. corporations for military contracts and weapons systems—a real deficit-breaker—is passed with barely any discussion and hardly a news article.

Physicians for a National Health Program estimates that a universal, comprehensive single-payer health plan would cost $350 billion a year, which would actually be the amount saved through the elimination of all the administrative costs in the current private health care system—a system that leaves out almost 50 million people.

Compare this to just the cost overruns each year in the military budget. Even President Obama on signing the Pentagon budget said, "The Government Accountability Office, the GAO, has looked into 96 major defense projects from the last year, and found cost overruns that totaled $296 billion." (whitehouse.gov, Oct. 28)

Bernard Madoff's $50-billion Ponzi scheme, supposedly the biggest rip-off in history, pales in comparison. Why is there no criminal inquiry into this multibillion-dollar theft? Where are the congressional hearings or media hysteria about $296 billion in cost overruns? Why are the CEOs of the corporations not brought into court in handcuffs?

The cost overruns are an integral part of the military subsidy to the largest U.S. corporations. They are treated as business as usual. Regardless of the party in office, the Pentagon budget grows, the cost overruns grow and the proportion of domestic spending shrinks.

WW PHOTO: KRIS HAMEL

Addicted to war

This year's military budget is only the latest example of how the U.S. economy is kept afloat by artificial means. Decades of constantly reviving the capitalist economy through the stimulus of war spending has created an addiction to militarism that U.S. corporations can't do without. But it is no longer large enough to solve the capitalist problem of overproduction.

The justification given for this annual multibillion-dollar shot in the arm was that it would help to cushion or totally avoid a capitalist recession and could curb unemployment. But as Workers World Party founder Sam Marcy warned in 1980 in "Generals Over the White House," over a protracted period more and more of this stimulant is needed. Eventually it turns into its opposite and becomes a massive depressant that sickens and rots the entire society.

The root of the problem is that as technology becomes more productive, workers get a smaller and smaller share of what they produce. The U.S. economy is more and more dependent on the stimulant of superprofits and multibillion-dollar military cost overruns to soak up a larger and larger share of what is produced. This is an essential part of the constant redistribution of wealth away from the workers and into the pockets of the superrich.

According to the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, U.S. military spending is now significantly more, in 2009 inflation-adjusted dollars, than it was during the peak years of the Korean War (1952: $604 billion), the Vietnam War (1968: $513 billion) or the 1980s Reagan-era military buildup (1985: $556 billion). Yet it is no longer enough to keep the U.S. economy afloat.

Even forcing oil-rich countries dependent on the U.S. to become debtor nations with endless weapons purchases can't solve the problem. More than two-thirds of all weapons sold globally in 2008 were from U.S. military companies. (Reuters, Sept. 6)

While a huge military program was able in the 1930s to pull the U.S. economy out of a devastating collapse, over a long period this artificial stimulus undermines capitalist processes.

Economist Seymour Melman, in books such as "Pentagon Capitalism," "Profits without Production" and "The Permanent War Economy: American Capitalism in Decline," warned of the deterioration of the U.S. economy and the living standards of millions.

Melman and other progressive economists argued for a rational "economic conversion" or the transition from military to civilian production by military industries. They explained how one B-1 bomber or Trident submarine could pay the salaries of thousands of teachers, provide scholarships or day care or rebuild roads. Charts and graphs showed that the military budget employs far fewer workers than the same funds spent on civilian needs.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

These were all good and reasonable ideas, except that capitalism is not rational. In its insatiable drive to maximize profits it will always choose immediate superprofit handouts over even the best interests of its own long-term survival.

No "peace dividend"

The high expectations, after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, that billions of dollars could now be turned toward a "peace dividend" crashed against the continued astronomical growth of the Pentagon budget. This grim reality has so demoralized and overwhelmed progressive economists that today almost no attention is paid to "economic conversion" or the role of militarism in the capitalist economy, even though it is far larger today than at the highest levels of the Cold War.

The multibillion-dollar annual military subsidy that bourgeois economists have relied on since the Great Depression to prime the pump and begin again the cycle of capitalist expansion is no longer enough.

Once corporations became dependent on multibillion-dollar handouts, their appetite became insatiable. In 2009, in an effort to stave off a meltdown of the global capitalist economy, more than $700 billion was handed over to the largest banks. And that was just the beginning. The bailout of the banks is now in the trillions of dollars.

Even $600 to $700 billion a year in military spending can no longer restart the capitalist economy or generate prosperity. Yet corporate America can't do without it.

The military budget has grown so large that it now threatens to overwhelm and devour all social funding. Its sheer weight is squeezing out funding for every human need. U.S. cities are collapsing. The infrastructure of bridges, roads, dams, canals and tunnels is disintegrating. Twenty-five percent of U.S drinking water is considered "poor." Unemployment is officially reaching 10 percent and in reality is double that. Black and Latino/a youth unemployment is more than 50 percent. Fourteen million children in the U.S. are living in households below the poverty level.

Half of military costs are hidden

The announced 2010 military budget of $680 billion is really only about half of the annual cost of U.S. military expenditures.

These expenditures are so large that there is a concerted effort to hide many military expenses in other budget items. The War Resisters League annual analysis listed the real 2009 U.S. military expenses at $1,449 billion, not the official budget of $651 billion. Wikipedia, citing several different sources, came up with a total military budget of $1,144 billion. Regardless of who is counting, it is beyond dispute that the military budget actually exceeds $1 trillion a year.

The National Priorities Project, the Center for Defense Information and the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation analyze and expose many hidden military expenses tucked into other parts of the total U.S. budget.

For example, veterans' benefits totaling $91 billion are not included in the Pentagon budget. Military pensions totaling $48 billion are stuck into the Treasury Department budget. The Energy Department hides $18 billion in nuclear weapons programs in its budget. The $38 billion financing of foreign arms sales is included in the State Department budget. One of the largest hidden items is the interest on debt incurred in past wars, which totals between $237 billion and $390 billion. This is really an endless subsidy to the banks, which are intimately linked to the military industries.

Every part of these bloated budgets is expected to grow by 5 to 10 percent a year, while federal funding to states and cities is shrinking by 10 to 15 percent annually, leading to deficit crises.

According to the Office of Management and Budget, 55 percent of the total 2010 U.S. budget will go to the military. More than half! Meanwhile, federal block grants to states and cities for vital human services—schools, teacher training, home-care programs, school lunches, basic infrastructure maintenance for drinking water, sewage treatment, bridges, tunnels and roads—are shrinking.

Militarism breeds repression

The most dangerous aspect of the growth of the military is the insidious penetration of its political influence into all areas of society. It is the institution that is the most removed from popular control and the most driven to military adventure and repression. Retired generals rotate into corporate boardrooms, become talking heads in major media outlets, and high-paid lobbyists, consultants and politicians.

It is not a coincidence that along with having the world's largest military machine, the U.S. has the world's largest prison population. The prison-industrial complex is the only growth industry. According to the U.S. Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics, more than 7.3 million adults were on probation or parole or incarcerated in 2007. More than

Continued on page 10

With new accord signed

President Zelaya urges Hondurans to be vigilant

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Nov. 2—After 125 days on the streets protesting the military coup that had deposed their elected president, the people of Honduras have finally seen a positive sign that could lead to the reinstatement of President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales.

A treaty called the Tegucigalpa-San José Accord—a version of the treaty previously mediated by Costa Rican President Oscar Arias—was signed on Oct. 30 by representatives of both President Zelaya and Roberto Micheletti. Micheletti is the illegal and criminal "golpista"—coup leader—who seized the Honduran presidency on behalf of the country's oligarchy and transnational corporations. When the opposition first showed its strength in the streets, Washington picked Arias as mediator. Most of the corporations operating in Honduras are U.S.-based.

Although it is weak and does not represent the real aspirations of the majority of the Honduran people, this treaty does provide for the reinstatement of President Zelaya to office. This was the primary demand of the people, represented by their vanguard, the Popular National Front of Resistance Against the Coup.

It was the Resistance's decisive, courageous and consistent struggle that forced the Micheletti golpistas to sign. Up to now, they had rejected any agreement that would entail the restitution of Zelaya to office and had arrogantly rebuffed every demand by the Honduran people and the international community for Micheletti to give up his seat. It has been the struggle of the Resistance that has made the government of Micheletti an international pariah.

The Resistance considers the signing a partial victory.

A main obstacle is that the treaty is conditional on the approval of the National Congress, which is controlled by the pro-coup forces. According to the treaty's timeline, a government of reconciliation, made up of representatives of all the political parties, should be in place by Nov. 5. However, as of Nov. 2, the Congress has not met. Supporters of the coup have claimed that Congress must stay closed because of general elections scheduled for Nov. 29. However, a call was put out for an emergency meeting on Nov. 3 to vote on the accord.

Why was treaty signed now?

Since the military coup, the present Micheletti administration has been ostracized by the vast majority of the world's countries, which have vowed not to recognize the results of any elections as long as President Zelaya is not restored to office. This isolation has meant economic strangulation and lack of cultural as well as diplomatic and other exchanges with members of the Organization of American States, the United Nations and the progressive bloc of Latin American countries known as ALBA. Poverty and hunger have increased.

There are constant strikes, mobilizations and actions by the Resistance that make it very difficult for the usurper administration to govern. The police and military, which have constantly repressed the people, are exhausted and the cost is draining the country's budget.

In this globalized economy, it is almost impossible for a country to survive without international trade and exchange. Micheletti and his allies, in their infinite arrogance, had stated many times that they did not need the international community. They were able to survive until now because of aid and trade with the U.S., Honduras' main commercial partner and the golpistas' main source of power. Washington, since the first day of the coup, has been vague in its condemnation, resisting international calls to put pressure on the Micheletti government to give up.

Now, less than a month until the elections, U.S. policy makers want a "legitimate" government in Honduras that is recognized and accepted by the international community. Most important, they want to preserve the Palmerola military airbase that President Zelaya had planned to convert to civilian use and also preserve the multimillion-dollar profits of the "maquilas" operated there by transnational corporations.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Thomas Shannon, who was sent to Tegucigalpa by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to work out the treaty, said it bluntly: "It was worth a political risk in order to ensure that on November 29 there were international observers on the ground and broad recognition in the OAS and elsewhere that the results of that election were going to be free, fair and legitimate and that the president who takes power on January 27 was going to be in a position to petition for Honduras' reintegration into the inter-American community and to get access again to international financial institutions." (www.america.gov)

The role of the Latin American countries is important. At the end of June, just when President Barack Obama was in Trinidad and Tobago saying he wanted better relations with the countries of the South, a U.S.-sponsored coup wreaked havoc in the region, threatening the progressive and popular processes there. Firm condemnation of the Honduran coup by these countries has put enormous pressure on the Obama administration.

After finding a way back into his own country, President Zelaya was given protection at the Brazilian Embassy. Brazil, the country with the largest economy in Latin America, is friendly to the U.S. but very firmly opposed to the coup. It is likely that Brazil and the countries of the ALBA, particularly Venezuela, which is the fifth-largest oil exporter to the U.S., have exerted some financial or trade pressure.

Zelaya advises vigilance

In an interview Nov. 1 with TeleSUR, the Venezuelan-based television network, President Zelaya sent this message: "We celebrate this accord but we also caution the international community that the struggle, the purposes and objectives that we have planned for the reversal of this coup have not finished. ... For the moment, I urge the international community to remain firm in your positions so that we are victorious and that this accord can be completed. Be firm until the accord is carried out. ... In these accords, there is always the possibility of manipulation, of obscure games that they can play among themselves. That is why we should be vigilant until the accord is carried out."

This statement is in sharp contrast to those of Hillary Clinton and U.S. Ambassador to Honduras Hugo Llorens, who talk of the accord as a consummated fact. Llorens has called on the international community to immediately normalize relations with Honduras and accept the result of the Nov. 29 elections.

What does the Resistance say?

Workers World spoke on Oct. 2 with Wendy Cruz from Vía Campesina, one of the organizations of the Front. She said that the Resistance will continue strong and in the streets until Zelaya is back in office and a Constitutional Assembly has been convened. The latter was not included in the accord and is vigorously opposed by the right wing.

In terms of the repression against the movement, she mentioned that the police had just invaded the offices of the Front and taken their computers in order to get contacts and information.

WW also spoke with Front leader Juan Barahona, who conveyed thanks for the solidarity of the U.S. movement and for the recent delegation that visited Honduras. On behalf of the Resistance, he had been part of the negotiating team in the talks with the OAS and President Zelaya. In consultation with Zelaya, he left the talks when an accord was reached that would prohibit the convening of a Constitutional Assembly. He stated that in all honesty he could not sign a treaty that would bar the Assembly. Zelaya accepted his resignation and nominated another person in Barahona's place.

Barahona told WW that the Resistance, on behalf of the people of Honduras, is now maintaining a constant vigil in front of the National Congress so that it will vote on the accord. He said the people have many expectations regarding this accord

Continued on page 11

Solidarity team reports on struggle in Honduras

New York—The Honduran ambassador to the United Nations, the Hon. Jorge Arturo Reina, and former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark participated in an event here on Oct. 27 in solidarity with the resistance in Honduras, which coalesced after a coup in that country deposed the elected president, Manuel Zelaya. The New York event featured members of the U.S. Delegation of Labor, Community and Clergy in Solidarity with the Honduran Resistance, who had traveled to Honduras and during their stay, from Oct. 7 to 11, met with activists there and participated in demonstrations at the Brazilian Embassy, where Zelaya and others were under siege by the army and police. A video of the delegation's experiences in Honduras was shown. Each speaker stressed the urgency of the situation in Honduras and the need for international solidarity with the resistance there.

—LeiLani Dowell

PHOTO: ROBERTO MERCADO

Honduras U.N. Ambassador Jorge Reina (standing) with, left to right, Teresa Gutierrez, Lucy Pagoada and LeiLani Dowell.

workers world editorial

Revolution– then and now

It is 92 years since the Bolshevik Revolution stunned the ruling classes of the world. For more than 70 years, until the pulling down of the Soviet Union in 1991, the impact of that great upheaval of the workers and peasants could not be ignored by those in the imperialist countries whose preoccupation was to weigh how far they could go in squeezing every last cent out of the workers and every last resource out of the oppressed countries of the world. The specter of provoking similar revolutionary uprisings was always before them to temper their greed and arrogance.

The October Revolution (Nov. 7 by the Western calendar) came out of the terrible havoc and suffering caused by the first imperialist world war of 1914-18. It was a major factor in bringing that war to an end. The European imperialist powers, soon to be joined by the U.S. and Japan, had dragged millions of workers to their deaths in the struggle over which group of capitalists would control the riches of the colonies. At first the socialist movement in Europe capitulated to the war fever, but a few true internationalists—including V.I. Lenin, who would lead the revolution in Russia—stood up against their respective governments and called on the workers to fight their own ruling classes instead of fellow toilers from other countries.

The Bolsheviks, on taking power, published the secret agreements made among the imperialists to carve up Europe and the world after the war. They took Russia out of the war. They inspired uprisings among the troops of other countries who refused to continue to fight.

This impoverished country seemed like the last place on earth where socialism could be built. But the Bolsheviks had no choice. They had to liberate the land from the landlords and the factories and banks from the bosses—and they did. What was so very hard was to reorganize such an underdeveloped economy to meet the needs of the masses.

By the 1930s, however, when the capitalist world had fallen into the pit of the Great Depression, the superiority of socialist planning had proven itself in the Soviet Union. Freed from the profit motive, state-owned industries and agricultural collectives and state farms were forging ahead. Workers elsewhere were clamoring for the kind of security that was being built in the USSR: the right to a job or income, the right to education and health care, equal rights for women. The USSR was a pioneer in all these fields.

Around this anniversary, there will be much in the capitalist media dwelling on the shortcomings of the USSR. How much will be said about how its overthrow greatly worsened conditions for the workers in Russia and other former republics of the Soviet Union? How after 1991 life expectancy dropped, workers lost their jobs, tuberculosis and drug addiction soared, and gangster capitalists grabbed up state property, with the help of the imperialists? How women were hardest hit and prostitution is now a thriving industry in Russia and Eastern Europe? How inequality among the nationalities soared?

What is never mentioned is how, once the Soviet Union had disappeared as a world rival, the huge multinationals felt free to show their true face. They could cut wages at will, move from one area to another—aided by the revolution in technology—in search of workers to exploit.

The imperialist governments, which represent these powerful corporations, could now intervene militarily against any development in the oppressed countries that they saw as threatening their interests—and have done so, hundreds of times.

The imperialists promised that the post-Soviet era would be one of peace and prosperity. All the world's problems, they said, were caused by the belligerence of the Soviet leaders. (Today, they say it's all the fault of Islamic fundamentalism.)

What a joke. With the downfall of the bloc of countries that had broken with capitalism, the full irrationality of the capitalist system is revealed in all its nakedness. The higher the technology, the greater the misery of the masses. The more goods produced, the more unemployment. The closer humanity comes to being able to feed, house and clothe itself, with plenty left over for culture, education and recreation, the further away these things become for most of the world's people.

With capitalism now supreme, young people must worry whether there will be clean water to drink, pure air to breathe, and a liveable world by the time they have kids of their own.

The Russian Revolution provided many lessons in the struggle for workers' power. Its leaders analyzed and debated all the time. Their copious writings have so much to offer today on the nature of imperialism, the struggle for workers' democracy, the smashing of the capitalist state and its replacement by workers' rule.

But there is no universal blueprint for revolution. Revolutionaries must weigh the conditions, the time and place and past history, in order to find a path for the working people to take back what they have created and build a much, much better world. The workers and peasants of Russia did it, under much more adverse conditions. It can and will be done here. □

The Pentagon budget: largest ever and growing

Continued from page 8

70 percent of the incarcerated are Black, Latino/a, Native and other people of color. Black adults are four times as likely as whites to be imprisoned.

Just as in the military, with its hundreds of thousands of contractors and mercenaries, the drive to maximize profits has led to the growing privatization of the prison system.

The number of prisoners has grown relentlessly. There are 2.5 times more people in the prison system today than 25 years ago. As U.S. capitalism is less and less able to provide jobs, job training or education, the only solutions offered are prisons or the military, wreaking havoc on individuals, families and communities.

The weight of the military pushes the repressive state apparatus into every part of society. There is an enormous growth of police of every kind and countless police and intelligence agencies.

The budget for 16 U.S. spy agencies reached $49.8 billion in fiscal year 2009; 80 percent of these secret agencies are arms of the Pentagon. (Associated Press, Oct. 30) In 1998 this expense was $26.7 billion. But these top secret agencies are not included in the military budget. Nor are the repressive agencies of immigration and border control.

U.S. armed forces are stationed at more than 820 military installations around the world. This doesn't count hundreds of leased bases and secret listening posts and many hundreds of ships and submarines.

But the more the military machine grows, the less it can control its world empire because it offers no solutions and no improvements in living standards. Pentagon high-tech weapons can read a license plate on a car from a surveillance satellite; their night vision goggles can penetrate the dark; and their drones can incinerate an isolated village. But they are unable to provide potable water, schools or stability to the nations attacked.

Despite all the Pentagon's fantastic high-tech weapons, the U.S. geopolitical position is slipping year after year. Regardless of its massive firepower and its state-of-the-art weaponry, U.S. imperialism has been unable to reconquer the world markets and position of U.S. finance capital. Its economy and its industries have been dragged down by the sheer weight of maintaining its military machine. And as the resistance in Iraq and Afghanistan has shown, that machine cannot match the determination of people to control their own future.

As the mighty U.S. capitalist economy is able to offer less and less to working people here in the U.S., that level of determined resistance is sure to take root here as well. □

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Workers World has been proud to provide groundbreaking, working-class, anti-racist and anti-war truth for 50 years now.

This year you read our firsthand reports from the National March for Jobs and Tent City for the unemployed in Pittsburgh. You got a look inside Honduras when Workers World managing editor LeiLani Dowell provided eyewitness daily updates from the U.S. solidarity delegation that marched with the resistance and met with movement leaders in that country. You went to Lebanon and visited the camps of Palestinian refugees with WW reporter Joyce Chediac. We kept you informed on the struggles here against foreclosures, layoffs, racist police brutality and the military-industrial-prison complex.

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It is critical for Workers World to continue in print, but doing so requires the funds necessary to cover the costs of publication and distribution.

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U.S. war crimes alienate peoples of Pakistan, Afghanistan

By Kris Hamel

Recent events in Afghanistan and neighboring Pakistan have again put the spotlight on U.S. imperialist designs to continue to subjugate and dominate these south-central Asian countries. They have also shown that the besieged peoples of these nations will not bow down to what the belligerent occupation forces have in store for them.

Eight years of war and occupation in Afghanistan have failed to subdue the Taliban-led resistance. October was the deadliest month yet this year for U.S. forces engaged in the grossly misnamed "Operation Enduring Freedom." Fifty-nine GIs lost their lives. (icasualties.org)

The Aug. 20 presidential election in Afghanistan was supposed to have provided a veneer of "democracy" and legitimacy that would justify the continued U.S.-led occupation and war. Instead, incumbent President Hamid Karzai "won" in an election marked by low voter turnout and rife with massive, widespread fraud. The U.S.-backed puppet leader had so many of his ballots invalidated that it pushed him below the 50 percent margin required for him to win.

Karzai's main rival, former Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah, himself a collaborator with the occupation forces, announced on Oct. 31 that he was boycotting the runoff election between him and Karzai scheduled for Nov. 7 after talks broke down on implementing measures to prevent further vote fraud.

The Taliban had called for a boycott of the election they called phony and said they would step up attacks on the occupying military forces. A Taliban statement warned that anyone involved in the electoral process would be considered a legitimate target. (aljazeera.net, Oct. 29)

On Nov. 2, under intense pressure from the United States and its imperialist allies, the Afghan "Independent Election Commission" canceled the runoff election and declared Karzai the winner, thus sparing the government and its U.S. masters another round of vote fraud charges and additional casualties.

These events occur as U.S. President Barack Obama is considering an increase of more than 40,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Gen. Stanley McChrystal, the top U.S. and NATO commander of the occupation forces, has said that unless this minimum number of additional forces is sent, the U.S. effort risks failure in opposing the growing Taliban resistance.

Pentagon's offensive against Obama

McChrystal's active promotion of the escalation showed that the Pentagon was attempting to dictate policy to the Obama administration. The president has been meeting with a bipartisan "war council" focused on future military strategy in Afghanistan and whether to accede to the Pentagon's demand for troops. It is apparent that many in the administration believe an escalation might lead to an even bigger debacle for the U.S.

In a speech at a naval air station in Jacksonville, Fla., on Oct. 26, however, Obama tried to placate the warhawks, saying he would "never hesitate to use force to protect the American people or our vital interests." (aljazeera.net, Oct. 27) He did not explain what vital interests the people of the U.S. have in Afghanistan.

Currently there are approximately 104,000 international troops in Afghanistan, including about 68,000 U.S. troops. Afghan armed forces number around 94,000 and are supported by a similar number of police, bringing the total occupation force to almost 300,000 members. (Associated Press, Oct. 28)

McChrystal says the extra forces are needed to implement a new strategy that focuses on "protecting civilians" while at the same time depriving the Taliban of popular support. In practice, this counter-insurgency strategy leads to enormous civilian deaths and high troop casualties. Taliban fighters number only approximately 25,000. Even with this 12 to 1 ratio, the U.S. occupation has been unable to defeat the resistance or curb attacks on its own forces.

In neighboring Pakistan, the U.S. government pushed the regime into a military offensive against Islamic resistance fighters along the border with Afghanistan in an area known as Waziristan. At stake for the Pakistani government is $7.5 billion in U.S. military aid to be used exclusively for "the war on terror."

In what is said to be a response by the Taliban to the government offensive, which has driven hundreds of thousands from their homes, there were several bombings in Pakistan in October that killed more than 300 people. On Nov. 2, at least 30 more were killed in a bombing near Pakistan's military headquarters in Rawalpindi.

Clinton flops in Pakistan

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton went on what much of the media called a three-day "charm offensive" to Pakistan Oct. 28-30. Her public relations tour was meant to shore up goodwill for the U.S., even as a majority of people in this impoverished country were rejecting U.S. military intervention and occupation in the region. Clinton's plane had barely touched down when a bomb attack killed 105 people in the city of Peshawar—an attack the Taliban denied making.

Clinton offended both the people and the Pakistani government as she point-blank accused the government of purposely not ridding the country of al-Qaeda: "I find it hard to believe that nobody in your government knows where they are and couldn't get them if they really wanted to." (Reuters, Oct. 29)

Clinton then tried to soften her tone but it was too late. The Pakistani masses were infuriated by the arrogance of the imperialist master. It seemed that everywhere Clinton went, angry Pakistanis confronted her and put her on the defensive, "brimming with resentment toward U.S. foreign policy." (AP, Oct. 29)

As Clinton was making a live broadcast with a primarily female audience of several hundred, a woman confronted the secretary of state, accusing Washington of "executions without trial" by using remote-controlled pilotless drones against the civilian population. Another woman asked Clinton how she would define terrorism. "Is it the killing of people in drone attacks?" the woman asked. A visibly frustrated Clinton could only reply "No."

Since August 2008, some 70 airstrikes by pilotless drone aircraft have killed at least 600 people in northwestern Pakistan. Philip Alston, the United Nations special rapporteur on extrajudicial executions, told a news conference in New York on Oct. 27 that such drone strikes in Afghanistan and Pakistan "may well violate international humanitarian law and international human rights law." (aljazeera.net, Oct. 28)

Clinton was asked repeatedly throughout her visit to Pakistan about the drone attacks and could only respond by saying, "There's a war going on."

Workers in the United States have no interest in fighting this war on behalf of an imperialist system that is desperately trying to maintain its stranglehold on the impoverished and struggling peoples of the world.

Poor and working people know in their bones that "terror" and "terrorism" are nothing but code words used by the powers that be to vilify and demonize those who would stand up and fight back to maintain their pride and dignity. Workers and oppressed people in the U.S. know that what's needed is a "war on joblessness" at home.

The people of Afghanistan and Pakistan have shown an indomitable will to struggle against the largest military behemoth in the world in order to defend their sovereignty and drive out the invaders. What is decisive is not military might but the will of the people. It is the duty of anti-imperialist activists in the U.S. to show solidarity with the resistance forces and demand U.S. out of Afghanistan and Pakistan. □

New Honduras accord

Continued from page 9

and expect Zelaya to be in office by Nov. 5.

"If there is no accord, the situation will be more difficult. We will not participate in the elections and the political situation will deepen, as well as the economic situation," Barahona said, adding that the Resistance will continue.

He said that if the accord is signed, the Resistance plans to run a candidate for president in the election.

He asked the people of the U.S. to demand that the U.S. government—particularly Thomas Shannon, who witnessed the signing of the accord—pressure the Honduran National Congress to sign it.

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Cuba wins again at U.N.

Foreign Minister speaks to solidarity activists

By Julie Fry
New York

Cuba solidarity activists were invited to the Cuban Mission to the United Nations on Oct. 29 to hear from Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez, who was in New York to attend the annual vote on a U.N. General Assembly resolution condemning the U.S. blockade of Cuba.

This is the 18th year in a row that the General Assembly has passed such a resolution. The U.S. has become increasingly isolated over the years in its position on Cuba. The vote this year was 187 to 3 in support of the resolution, with only Israel and the tiny island nation of Palau voting with the U.S. Two more countries joined with Cuba since last year's vote of 185 to 3 against the blockade.

One after another, world leaders rose to speak in the General Assembly about the cruelty and illegality of the blockade against Cuba. Foreign Minister Rodríguez called the blockade "an uncultured act of arrogance" and "an act of genocide" against the Cuban people. He spoke about the humanitarian toll caused by the blockade during the decades since it was imposed.

The enormous support Cuba received in the U.N. is surely an indication of the friendship and respect that the people of the world feel for socialist Cuba, which has provided decades of international solidarity and humanitarian assistance to countries everywhere. The fact that Cuba, a small and poor nation, has provided so much material aid in the form of doctors and other assistance to the world's poor only highlights the cruelty of the U.S. blockade in the eyes of the majority of the world. The U.S. failed to convince even its closest allies in Europe and Latin America that the blockade is legal or just.

The importance of this international solidarity was also highlighted at the meeting on Oct. 29, where Foreign Minister Rodríguez stressed the importance of continuing the fight for the freedom of the Cuban Five, who were arrested in the U.S. for their efforts to stop terrorism against Cuba. Leonard Weinglass, one of the attorneys for the Five, gave an update about the current legal posture of their cases. Three of the Five's sentences were vacated by the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals. Antonio Guerrero, one of the Five who was originally sentenced to life in prison, was resentenced in October to 21 years and 8 months by the original trial judge.

Weinglass reported that the U.S. attorney handling Guerrero's case contacted him before the sentencing hearing in October to offer a lesser sentence of 20 years for Guerrero. At the sentencing hearing, the U.S. attorney publicly admitted that this was due, in part, to the international attention the case has received. This statement is the first time the U.S. government has acknowledged that the international solidarity movement to free the Cuban Five is affecting its strategy with the case.

Despite this, the judge, presiding in a Miami courtroom filled with anti-Cuba activists, rejected the government's offer and imposed a higher sentence.

Weinglass and Foreign Minister Rodríguez encouraged the audience to redouble their efforts to free the Cuban Five and spread the word about this case. Fernando González and Ramón Labañino are scheduled to be resentenced on Dec. 9. The attorneys for the Five are continuing their efforts to appeal the conviction of Gerardo Hernández, who was sentenced to two life terms.

Minister Rodríguez thanked the solidarity activists for their support and resolve to continue the fight for the Five until they are all free. □

MUNDO OBRERO

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Agentes del FBI asesinan a líder musulmán de Michigan

Por Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Red de Noticias Panafricana
Detroit

Un conocido líder musulmán africano-americano de Detroit fue asesinado por agentes del Buró Federal de Investigaciones (FBI) el 28 de octubre en un almacén en Dearborn. El imán Luqman Ameen Abdullah de 53 años de edad, quien encabezaba la mezquita Masjid Al-Haqq en el oeste de la ciudad, fue asesinado durante una serie de redadas por agentes federales y oficiales de la policía que resultó en el arresto de 11 personas.

Los reportajes de la prensa corporativa sobre el asesinato del imán Abdullah y el arresto de los otros describen el hecho como una "operación antiterrorista", aunque las denuncias de crimen, que eran la base para las redadas, no hacían alusión a violaciones de la ley federal o a actos de terrorismo.

Una declaración conjunta del FBI y la oficina de la Fiscalía General de Estados Unidos dice que "los 11 acusados son miembros de un grupo que presuntamente ha estado envuelto en actividades violentas por un período de muchos años y se sabe que están armados".

Sin embargo, muchas personas que conocían al imán Abdullah y a los miembros de la mezquita Masjid Al-Haqq dicen que el grupo trabajó arduamente en las comunidades oprimidas que rodean al templo para eliminar las desgracias sociales que han resultado de muchos años de explotación y descuido.

El templo mismo fue víctima de la crisis económica que sigue empeorando en Detroit. El 20 de enero la Masjid Al-Haqq fue desalojada del edificio donde residía por muchos años como resultado de una retoma del lugar por falta de pago de impuestos. El templo fue trasladado a una casa en Clairmount, la cual también fue objeto de las redadas del 28 de octubre.

Dawud Walid, director ejecutivo del Consejo sobre las Relaciones Musulmana-Americanas (CRAM), capítulo de Michigan, dijo sobre el imán Abdullah que "Yo lo considero un imán respetado en la comunidad musulmana".

Walid continuó diciendo que "no tenemos ninguna información sobre actividades ilegales en el templo". Walid dijo sobre el imán Abdullah que "él daría todo por su gente. La congregación que él lideraba era muy pobre. El alimentó a mucha gente cristiana en su comunidad. Ayudó y asistió a muchos jóvenes con problemas. Gente que vivía con hambre iban a verle y él les dejaba dormir en el templo. Él les refugiaba del mal tiempo". (Detroit News, 29 de octubre)

El líder del CRAM, dijo, "Ellos no tienen ningún nexo con el terrorismo nacional o internacionalmente. ¿Qué tiene que ver el Islam con estos cargos? ¿Por qué la religión ha sido involucrada?

Reviviendo el Cointelpro

No sólo el FBI y la prensa capitalista están utilizando la farsa del "extremismo islámico", sino que también están intentando conectar los movimientos revolucionarios que surgieron durante los años sesenta con el arresto de los miembros de la Masjid Al-Haqq y la muerte del imán Abdullah.

Debido a la cercana relación entre el imán Jamil Abdullah al-Amin, anteriormente conocido como H. Rap Brown y el imán Abdullah durante años anteriores, el papel del Comité Coordinador de Estudiantes para la no Violencia (SNCC por las siglas en inglés)) y el Partido Panteras Negras (BPP), han sido evocados en la cobertura de las noticias sobre los asaltos del FBI y la policía. El imán Al-Amin fue organizador del SNCC y luego sirvió como presidente nacional del grupo sobre derechos civiles y poder negro (BPP) en 1967-68.

Al-Amin, quien actualmente está sirviendo una sentencia de por vida en Georgia luego de haber sido condenado por la muerte de un asistente del alguacil y herir a otro en Atlanta en el 2000, también brevemente tuvo la posición de Ministro de Justicia en el Partido de las Panteras Negras durante el año 1968. El imán Al-Amin sirvió como presidente del SNNC durante el período de extrema represión en contra de la organización, en 1967-68.

Al-Amin siempre ha mantenido su inocencia sobre la muerte de los oficiales en Atlanta y por muchos años ha tratado de ganar una apelación en este caso. Reportes del sistema de prisión en Georgia donde él está detenido indican que él ha sido hostigado y puesto en aislamiento en numerosas ocasiones.

El SNCC fue culpado en parte por el FBI y la prensa capitalista durante los años de 1967-68, de las rebeliones urbanas que brotaron en más de 200 ciudades. El Partido de las Panteras Negras iba a sufrir el peso de las operaciones del Programa de Contra Inteligencia (Cointelpro), que estaban dirigidas en contra de la comunidad africana-americana.

Más de dos docenas de miembros del BPP fueron asesinados entre 1968 y 1971 cuando el ex director del FBI Edgar Hoover calificó a la organización como la amenaza más peligrosa para la seguridad nacional de los Estados Unidos. Cientos de panteras y otros/as revolucionarios/as de esa época fueron arrestados/as y falsamente incriminados/as. Muchos/as otros/as fueron forzados/as al exilio o a la vida clandestina dentro de los Estados Unidos.

Según la denuncia del FBI, que consiste de 45 páginas de alegatos sumamente falsos, Abdullah "llama a sus seguidores a un yihad ofensivo" y dice que deben "tener una arma y no deben tener miedo de usar su arma cuando sea necesario".

No obstante, David Nu'man, quien vive en Detroit y consideraba al imán Abdullah como su amigo, enfatiza que él está muy escéptico en cuanto a lo que dicen sobre el líder musulmán y sus seguidores. "No parece ir con su carácter". (Detroit News, 29 de octubre).

Ron Scott, uno de los miembros fundadores del capítulo de Detroit del Partido de las Panteras Negras en 1968, habló con la Red de Noticias Panafricana sobre la muerte del imán Abdullah y las detenciones de miembros de la Masjid Al-Haqq.

Scott, ahora el portavoz de la Coalición de Detroit en Contra de la Brutalidad Policiaca y anfitrión del programa local de TV "Para mi gente", y quien es también anfitrión del programa de radio "Luchando por la justicia" que es emitido cada semana, expresó incredulidad sobre las alegaciones contra Abdullah y los que fueron detenidos.

"Esto refleja una norma de represión que no hemos visto desde hace mucho tiempo", dijo Scott a la Red de Noticias Panafricanas el 29 de octubre. "Debe haber una investigación independiente sobre las circunstancias alrededor de la muerte del imán Abdullah".

El Comité de Emergencia de Michigan contra la Guerra e Injusticia (MECAWI) discutió el asesinato del imán Abdullah en su reunión semanal del 28 de octubre en Detroit. Al próximo día, en una llamada a las oficinas del CRAM, un representante de MECAWI le expresó condolencias y solidaridad a la comunidad musulmana.

MECAWI ofreció su apoyo para cualquier protesta organizada para demandar justicia por la muerte del imán Abdullah y las detenciones de otros miembros musulmanes de la Masjid Al-Haqq. Walid, el director ejecutivo que respondió la llamada de MECAWI, expresó su agradecimiento por las condolencias y la preocupación expresada por la organización antiguerra.

Antecedentes de la muerte del imán Abdullah

Desde los ataques del 11 de septiembre del 2001 a las torres gemelas y al Pentágono, la represión contra las comunidades musulmanas, medio-orientales y surasiáticas en los Estados Unidos ha aumentado a un ritmo perturbador. Varias personas han sido atacadas y asesinadas en violencia racista.

Mucha gente más de estas comunidades ha sido encarcelada injustamente y deportada. Varias organizaciones caritativas han sido perseguidas y llevadas a la corte por presuntamente financiar a grupos "terroristas" y algunas han sido forzadas a cerrar por el gobierno estadounidense.

Hasta el CRAM ha sido objetivo de los esfuerzas gubernamentales. Durante el 2007 en Texas, miembros de una organización caritativa islámica fueron enjuiciados por supuestamente haber financiado a Hizbolá en el Líbano.

La conversión a la religión islámica dentro de la comunidad africana-americana ha aumentado significativamente durante las últimas décadas. El gobierno federal ha usado tanto el flagelo de la histeria anti-islámica como el racismo para intensificar el aparato represivo en los Estados Unidos. Este patrón de vigilancia, hostigamiento y arrestos ilegales es utilizado en un esfuerzo desesperado de la agencia de la Seguridad de la Patria y el Pentágono para conseguir apoyo para las guerras continuadas contra Irak, Afganistán y Pakistán.

Además de estas naciones del Medio Oriente y Asia, los países de Sudán y Somalia en el continente africano, que son predominantemente musulmanes, también han sido puntos focales de la intervención imperialista estadounidense durante los últimos años. Muchos de los países en camino de desarrollo que han sido identificados por los imperialistas estadounidenses como objetivos para la desestabilización y ocupación, tienen poblaciones mayoritariamente musulmanas de personas de color.

Por consiguiente, las organizaciones de derechos humanos, derechos civiles y contra la guerra deben ver la corriente ola de represión contra la comunidad musulmana como una que tiene un propósito tanto doméstico como de política exterior. Al satanizar la comunidad musulmana, ya sean musulmanes de descendencia africana, medio-oriental o asiática, le da un mecanismo al aparato represivo del estado para justificar la continuación y la intensificación del envolvimiento militar en el exterior.

Al mismo tiempo, el aumento en la represión contra las comunidades africana-americanas, musulmanas, latinas, y de otras comunidades de la clase trabajadora dentro de los Estados Unidos, está diseñada para impedir la posibilidad de que la gente se organice contra la creciente crisis económica que está afectando desproporcionadamente a la gente oprimida dentro de este país.

No obstante, la lucha contra esta ola de represión puede potencialmente unir a los/as trabajadores/as y los/as oprimidos/as de amplios sectores de los Estados Unidos en una alianza con los países en camino de desarrollo que están bajo la creciente amenaza del imperialismo estadounidense. □

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